

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

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P R 131317Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9538

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 6109

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 12-13 SYRIAN MEDIA REVIEW

1. LEAD STORY IN SYRIAN MEDIA SEPT. 12-13 WAS INCREASED
PACE OF EFFORTS TO SOLVE LEBANESE CRISIS WITH DAMASCUS AS
FOCAL POINT. FOLLOWING AL-BAATH HEADLINES GAVE FLAVOR.
SEPT 12: "DAMASCUS IN CENTER OF EFFORTS AND MEETINGS
TOWARD CEASEFIRE IN LEBANON. CHATTI, RASHID, AL-KHOLI,
AND KHALID AL-HASAN IN DAMASCUS TO HOLD SERIES OF MEETINGS
ON CURRENT SITUATION PREPARING ATMOSPHERE FOR SARKIS TO
ASSUME HIS CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES." SEPT. 13: "PRES. ASAD
RECEIVES KARAME AND NUMBER OF ARAB FOREIGN MINPSTERS.
DISCUSSIONS CENTER ON CONTINUING EFFORTS TO RESCUE
LEBANON FROM ITS ORDEAL. MESSAGE TO PRES. ASAD FROM
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KING KHALID. KARME: "WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FULL

ASSISTANCE FROM SYRIA TO RESTORE STABILITY IN OUR COUNTRY.' AL-YAFI: 'SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WAS USEFUL. IT IS TEMPORARY AND HAS NO POLITICAL PURPOSES.'"

2. PRESS NOTED FOLLOWING MEETINGS HAD TAKEN PLACE SEPT. 11-12 ON LEBANESE CRISIS BUT GAVE NO SUBSTANTIVE DETAILS:

(A) PRES. ASAD WITH PRIMIN KARAME;

(B) PRES. ASAD AND FONMIN KHADDAM WITH TUNISIAN FONMIN CHATTI, SAUDI FONMIN PRINCE SAUD, DEPUTY KUWAITI FONMINAL-RASHID, AND AL REPRESENTATIVE AL-KHOLI;

(C) PRES. ASAD AND FONMIN KHADDAM WITH SAUDI FONMIN TO RECEIVE MESSAGE FROM KING KHALID;

(D) FONMIN KHADDAM WITH TUNISIAN FONMIN CHATTI, KUWAITI DEPTUY FONMIN AL-RASHID, PLO EX-COMM MEMBER KHALID AL-HASAN, AND AL PRESENTATIVE AL-KHOLI;

(E) FONMIN KHADDAM WITH KUWAITI DEPUTY FONMIN;

(F) FONMIN KHADDAM WITH TUNISIAN FONMIN AND AL REPRESENTATIVE AL-KHOLI;

(G) FONMIN KHADDAM WITH ISLAMIC GROUPING (SOLH, SALAM, WAZZAN AND BARBIR);

(H) FONFMIN KHADDAM WITH IMAM MUSA SADR;

(I) PRIMIN KHALYFAWI WITH ISLAMIC GROUPING;

(J) MIN OF INTERIOR DABBAGH WITH IMAM SADR.

3. IN ARRIVAL STATEMENT TO SANA SEPT. 12 BEFORE MEETING WITH PRES. ASAD, PRIMIN KARAME SAID HE HAD COME TO DAMASCUS TO SEEK STALITY AND SECURITY FOR LEBANON. HE SAID ISRAEL WAS ONLY ONE BENFITING FROM PLOT BEING IMPLEMENTED AGAINST LEBANON AND EXPRESSED UNCLASSIFIED

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HOPE THAT ARABS WOULD RECOGNIZE DANGERS OF SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED LEBANESE CONFIDENCE IN SYRIA. FOLLOWING JARAME'S AFTERNOON MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, HE WAS PREISDENT'S QUEST AT IFTAR DINNER ALSO ATTENDED BY PRIMIN KHALYFAWI AND FONMIN KHADDAM.

4. SPET. 13 PRESS CARRIED STATEMENT BY FORMER PRIMIN AL-YAFI EXPRESSING OPTIMSIM REGARDING SITUATION. AL-YAFI

STATED THAT SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON HAD NO POLITICAL PURPOSE AND EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT SYRIAN PRESENCE IN BEKAA AND THE NORTH WAS PROVISIONAL AND HAD BEEN BENEFICIAL TO THE BEKAA. SYRIANS WOULD WITHDRAW, HE SAID, IF NEW LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SO REQUESTED. PRESS ALSO REPORTED STATEMENT BY AL-WAZZAN AFTER RETURN OF ISLAMIC GROUPING DELEGATION FROM DAMASCUS. HE SAID DELEGATION HAD BEEN SATISFIED WITH EFFORTS BEING EXERTED TO REACH SOLUTION. PRESENCE OF AL REPRESENTATIVE AND SOME ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS IN DAMASCUS AND ALSO CURRENT CONTACTS BETWEEN SYRIA AND PALESTINE RESISTANCE WERE EVIDENCE OF INTENSIFIED EFFORTS TO END FIGHTING BEFORE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS. DELEGATION, HE SAID, HAD FELT A SINCERE DESIRE ON PART OF ALL SYRIAN AND ARAB BROTHERS IN DAMASCUS TO REACH THIS SOLUTION.

5. ALL PAPERS SEPT 13. GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO STATEMENT BY FORMER PRIMIN SALAM ATTACKING JUMBLATT, PARTICULARLY HIS ACCUSATION THAT JUMBLATT WAS SACRIFICING LIVES OF PALESTINIANS TO SUPPORT HIS PERSONAL SCHEMES AND PROJECTS.

6. NEITHER SYRIAN PRESS NOR RADIO HAS MENTIONED SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN MEETING WHICH REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE IN SOFAR SEPT. 11 OR FACT THAT PRIMIN KARAME, MUSA SADR, AND OTHER LEBANESE LEADERS ARE EN ROUTE TO CAIRO FOLLOWING THEIR DAMASCUS TALKS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. ARTICLE IN SEPT. 12 AL-THAWRAH REHASHED GRIEVANCES AGAINST EGYPT INCLUDING SINAI ACCORD AND EGYPTIAN EFFORT TO SOW DISCORD BETWEEN SYRIAN AND PLO. ARTICLE CONCLUDED THAT PLOTTERS AND TRAITORS WOULD BE RESISTED AND SINCERE WILL AND EFFORT WOULD TRIUMPH IN LEBANON.

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7. MAJORITY OF ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS SPOKE OF NEW OPTIMISM AS RESULT OF INTENSIFIED MEETINGS IN DAMASCUS AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT LEBANESE CRISIS ON WAY TO SOLUTION. AL-BAATH POINTED TO CURRENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS EVIDENCE OF SYRIA'S UNCHANGING POSITION TOWARD CRISIS SINCE ITS INCEPTION. TISHRIIN POINTED OUT THAT OPTIMISM HAD NEVER BEEN AS HIGH AS NOW, AND NOTED THAT EVEN ROLE OF ARAB LEAGUE HAS RESULTED FROM INITIATIVE OF SYRIA WHICH INVITED ALL ARAB STATES TO HELP SAVE LEBANON FROM ITS INFERNO. SECOND TISHRIIN ARTICLE SPOKE OF LEBANON'S VICTORY OVER ITS CRISIS AS A VICTORY OVER SINAI AGREEMENT. IN CONTRAST TO SYRIAN INITIATIVE, ARTICLE STATED, " SADAT REGIME LOOKS ISOLATED, EXPOSED, STUMBLING, AND DEPRIVED OF ANY POWER TO INFLUENCE EVENTS POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY."

8. COMMENT: SYRIAN MEDIA IS REFLECTING GREAT OPTIMISM
THAT CURRENT INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE CEASEFIRE AND BRING
SARKIS INTO OFFICE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. IT IS GIVING
FULL CREDIT FOR THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO PRESIDENT ASAD AND
IS NOT ONLY UNWILLING TO ATTRIBUTE ANY CREDIT TO EGYPT
BUT EVEN TO RECOGNIZE ANY EGYPTIAN ROLE OUTSIDE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE
FRAMEWORK. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER SYRIAN
MEDIA RESPONDS TO FAHMY'S ASSERTION THAT CAIRO'S RECEPTION OF
LEBANESE POLITICIANS INDICATES EGYPT IS NOW ASSUMING PIVOTAL
ROLE IN PEACE PROCESS.
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